

YELLOW PERCH

New Fishing Opportunities

By Gene Van Eeckhout and Greg Power



Chris Grondahl

Dry Lake near Ashley produced these nice-sized perch for John Dockter, Mandan during the winter of 1997.

Interest in ice fishing for yellow perch has grown dramatically in recent years. Although Devils Lake is still a popular destination for winter perch anglers, many “new” lakes scattered throughout 17 counties in southeastern and south central North Dakota have sparked much attention. These lakes are primarily the result of unprecedented high water during the past decade.

Lakes such as Dry Lake in McIntosh County, Flood Lake in LaMoure County, and Alkaline Lake in Kidder County have, at times, produced outstanding perch fishing in recent winters. The perch that now exist in these lakes are generally the result of planned stocking efforts of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. Stocking has included adults (brood fish), fingerling and eggs, depending on the situation.

Beyond intentional perch stocking by the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, in a number of cases perch have made their way into the new lakes via overland drainage from neighboring waterways and/or from illegal stocking. Illegal stocking of perch – and other fish – is a major concern.

For example, nearly one-half of these new lakes sampled this past summer by fisheries division staff yielded undesirable species including carp and bullhead. Over the long run, sustaining a quality perch fishery in lakes with carp or bullhead is virtually impossible. Anglers are reminded that stocking of any live fish or live fish eggs into any waters of the state is illegal except with an appropriate permit.

To assist anglers in catching yellow perch during the winter of 2002-2003, Game and Fish staff developed the accompanying list of new perch lakes. This list includes water bodies with relatively new (within the past five or so years) perch fisheries, or lakes that may develop into perch fisheries this winter.

Note: This list may not include all new perch lakes. In some cases, public access issues may exist, the fishery did not develop after being stocked, or the perch are still too small. In addition to lake names, the following are also provided: directions – generally from the nearest community; stocking information – if stocked by the Game and Fish Department, includes documented stocking of eggs, fingerling or adults and year(s) perch were stocked; lake size, maximum depth – please note: these are the only two physical features that are available for most lakes. Because these lakes are relatively new, there are no lake contour maps; potential for winterkill –

since many of these lakes are shallow and the weather this past summer in south central North Dakota was very dry, a number of these lakes may be vulnerable to winterkill; other game fish known to be present – as noted above, a number of the new perch lakes have been illegally stocked with other species. Introductions of pike (as well as bullhead and carp) are particularly troublesome as these species will greatly shorten the life expectancy of a quality yellow perch fishery in most lakes.

Many of these lakes have new easements that allow public access. Most of these are generally open to ice fishing only. In many cases, these easements were made possible by the goodwill of private landowners, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (waterfowl production areas), and the Game and Fish Department (wildlife management areas) who have been willing to open up limited access to these new lakes. The fishing public must show respect of both the public and private land, police themselves, and make sure to keep the ice clean of trash.

YELLOW PERCH OPPORTUNITIES

BARNES COUNTY

1. Christ Pond – five miles south, 2½ miles east, and ½ mile north of Wimbledon. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 40 acres. Winter access easement only.

2. Eckelson Lake – two miles east of Eckelson. Stocked with adults in 2001. Approximate size – 900 acres. Maximum known depth 15 feet.

3. Hobart Lake – six miles west of Valley City. Stocked with eggs in 1997. Approximate size – 1,350 acres.

4. Fox Lake – one mile west and 1 mile north of Eckelson. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 700 acres.

5. Kee Lake – seven miles south and 2 miles east of Eckelson. Stocked with adults in 2001. Approximate size – 300 acres. Maximum known depth 12 feet.

6. Koeborn Lake – one mile north, 4 miles west, and 1 mile north of Rogers. Stocked with fingerling in 2001. Approximate size – 190 acres.

7. Meadow Lake – six miles west, and 6 miles north of Litchville. Stocked with adults and eggs in 2000. Approximate size – 1,300 acres. Maximum known depth 8 feet. Winterkill potential.

8. Mosher WPA – two miles north, and 5 miles east of Dazey. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 300 acres. Maximum known depth 14 feet.

9. Olson WPA – one and ½ miles east, and ½ mile south of Sanborn. Stocked with eggs in 1999, adults in 2000. Approximate size – 300 acres. Maximum known depth 15 feet.

10. Peterson WPA – one mile east of Nome. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 60 acres. Maximum known depth 6 feet. Winterkill potential.

11. Sanborn Lake – two miles east of Sanborn. Approximate size – 240 acres. Maximum known depth 26 feet.

12. Sanborn WPA – half mile east of Sanborn. Stocked with adults in 2001. Approximate size – 550 acres. Maximum known depth 8 feet. Winterkill potential.

13. St. Mary's Lake – two miles west, 5½ miles south, 4 miles west, and 1 mile north of Valley City. Stocked with adults in 1998. Approximate size – 110 acres.

14. Ten Mile Lake – one mile south, and 7 miles east of Wimbledon. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 2,100 acres.

15. Valley City WMA (Adam's Slough) – three miles north, 3 miles east and 2 miles north of Valley City. Stocked with fingerling in 2001 and adults in 2002. Approximate size – 1,100 acres. Maximum known depth 5 feet. Winterkill potential.

BURLEIGH COUNTY

16. Arena/Harriet Lake – eight miles west, and 1 mile south of Tuttle. Stocked with adults in 2001 and 2002. Approximate size – 2,000 acres. Maximum known depth 12 feet. Winterkill potential. Northern pike present.

17. Twin Lakes – seven miles west, and 5 miles north of Tuttle. Stocked with adults in 1996. Maximum known depth is 11 feet. Poor winter access if snow is present. Winterkill potential.

DICKEY COUNTY

18. Heinrich Lake – eighteen miles east, and 1 mile south of Ashley. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 650 acres. Maximum known depth 8 feet. Winterkill potential.

19. Shimmans Lake – six miles north, 7 miles west, and 1 mile south of Forbes. Stocked with adults in 1997. Approximate size – 400 acres.

EDDY COUNTY

20. Coenen Lake – one and ½ miles south, 2 miles east and 5½ miles south of Warwick. Stocked with adult and fingerling perch in 1998, fingerling perch in 1999 and 2000. Approximate size – 150 acres. Maximum known depth 13 feet. Northern pike present.

EMMONS COUNTY

21. Rice Lake – six miles south of Strasburg. Approximate size – 1,000 acres. Maximum known depth is 15 feet. Winterkill potential. Northern pike and walleye present.

22. Senger Lake – one mile north and 6 miles east of Strasburg. Stocked with eggs and adults in 1997 and fingerling in 1998. Approximate size – 1,000 acres. Maximum known depth is 10 feet. Winterkill potential.

23. Baumgartner Lake – six miles south of Linton. Stocked with eggs in 1997 and fingerling in 1998. Approximate size – 1,000 acres. Winterkill potential.

FOSTER COUNTY

24. Dry Lake – eleven miles east, and 5 miles south of Carrington. Stocked with adults in 1998, fingerling in 1999 and 2000. Approximate size – 1,050 acres. Maximum known depth 21 feet.

25. Okert WPA – four miles south of Carrington. Stocked with fingerling in 2001. Approximate size – 230 acres. Maximum known depth 7 feet. Winterkill potential.

GRIGGS COUNTY

26. Sibley Lake – one mile west, and 3 miles south of Binford. Stocked with adults in 1999 and fingerling in 2000. Approximate size – 750 acres. Maximum known depth is 13 feet. Northern pike present.

KIDDER COUNTY

27. Alkaline Lake – 15 miles south, and 3 miles east of Tappen. Approximate size – 5,850 acres. Maximum known depth 18 feet.

28. Fresh Lake – fourteen miles south, 1 mile east, and 1½ miles south of Tappen. Stocked with adults in 1998 and 1999. Approximate size – 300 acres. Maximum known depth 12 feet. Northern pike present.

29. George Lake – ten miles south, and 1 mile west of Crystal Springs. Stocked with adults in 2001. Approximate size – 1,850 acres.

30. Lake Helen – 2½ miles west, and 6 miles north of Tuttle. Stocked with adults in 2001. Approximate size – 1,000 acres. Maximum known depth 20 feet. Northern pike present.

31. Jasper Lake – six miles north of Robinson. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 500 acres. Maximum known depth 16 feet.

32. Leno Lake – one mile east, and 7 miles north of Tuttle. Stocked with adults in 2001. Approximate size – 350 acres. Maximum known depth 13 feet.

33. McPhail Lake – seven miles north, and 2 miles west of Tappen. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 950 acres. Maximum known depth 23 feet.



34. Salt-Alkaline Lake – five miles north, and 5 miles east of Tappen. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 650 acres. Maximum known depth 16 feet.

35. West Crystal Springs – one-half mile west of Crystal Springs. Maximum known depth 20 feet.

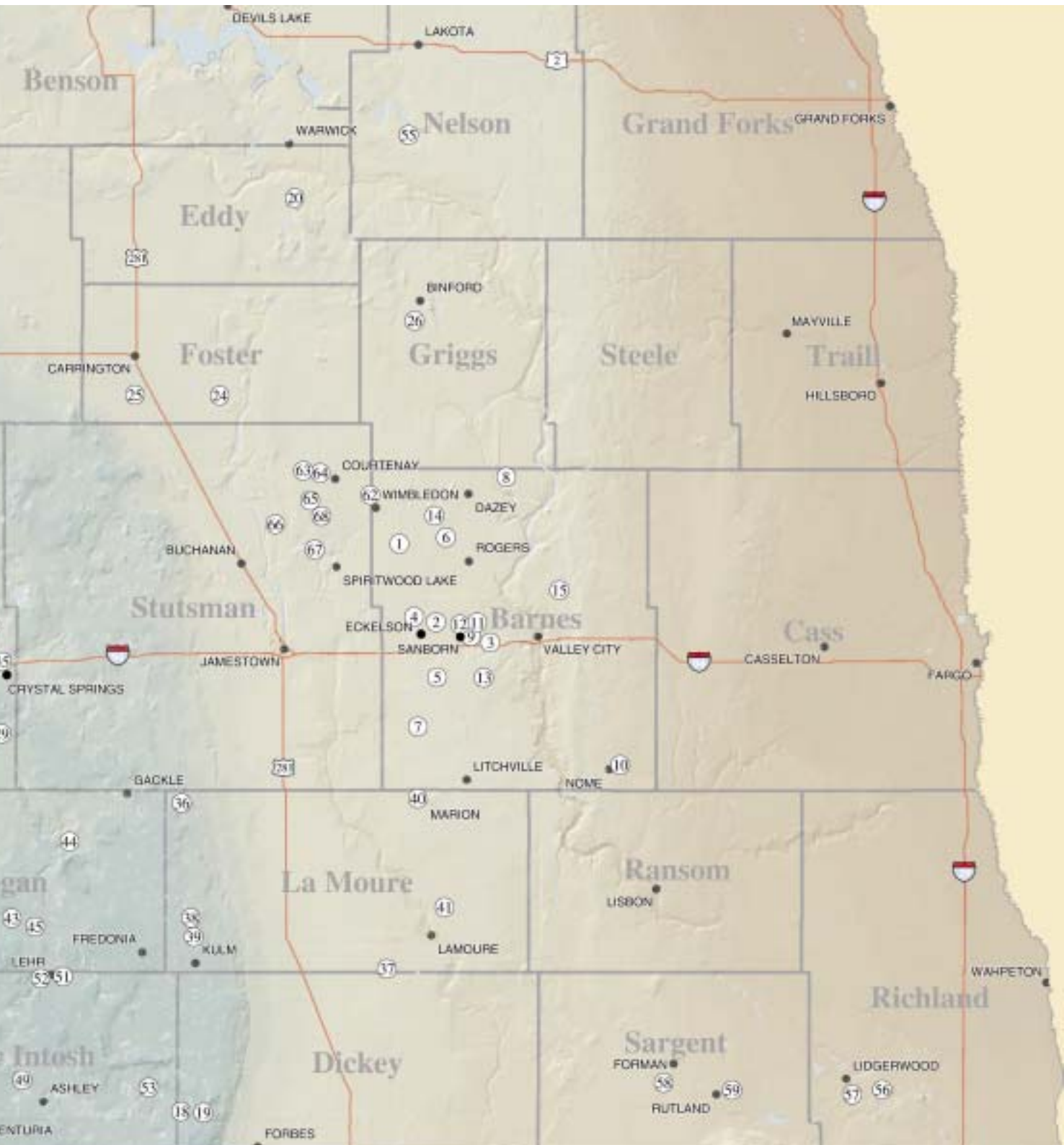
LAMOURE COUNTY

36. Alfred Lake – seven miles east, and 1½ miles south of Gackle. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 550 acres. Maximum known depth 11 feet.

37. Cottonwood Lake – five miles west, 5 miles south, and 1 mile west of LaMoure. Stocked with adults in 1998 and 1999. Approximate size – 170 acres.

38. Diamond Lake – five miles north of Kulm. Stocked with adults in 1999. Approximate size – 450 acres. Some northern pike present.

39. Flood Lake – three and ½ miles north of Kulm. Approximate size – 1,100 acres. Maximum known depth 16 feet.



40. Marion Lake – one-half mile west of Marion. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 200 acres. Maximum known depth 13 feet. Walleye, crappie and bluegill present.

41. Twin Lakes – three miles north, and 1 mile east of LaMoure. Stocked with adults in 1998 and 1999. Approximate size – 600 acres.

LOGAN COUNTY

42. Braun Lake – five miles north, and 6 miles west of Napoleon. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 70 acres. Maximum known depth 17 feet.

43. Logan WMA (also known as Mueller or Miller) **Lake** – eight miles north, and 5 miles west of Lehr. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 1,400 acres. Some northern pike present.

44. Marvin Miller Lake – six and ½ miles south, and 8 miles west of Gackle. Stocked with eggs in 1997, and adults in 1999. Approximate size – 350 acres. Maximum known depth 16 feet. Some northern pike present. Open to winter fishing; walking access only during summer months.

45. Ruff Lake – six miles north, and 2 miles west of Lehr. Stocked with adults in 2001. Approximate size – 160 acres. Maximum known depth 8 feet. Winterkill potential.

46. West (Napoleon) Lake (McKenna) – one mile west of Napoleon. Stocked with fingerling in 1998, adults in 2000. Approximate size – 2,350 acres. Maximum known depth 13 feet. Northern pike present. Winterkill potential.

McHENRY COUNTY

47. Round Lake – six miles north, and 4½ miles east of Drake. Approximate size – 600 acres. Maximum known depth is 50 feet. Walleye and black crappie present.

McINTOSH COUNTY

48. Dollinger-Schnabel Lake – two miles north, 5 miles west, and 3 miles north of Venturia. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 850 acres.

49. Dry Lake – three miles west, and 3½ miles north of Ashley. Approximate size – 5,400 acres. Maximum known depth 21 feet.

50. Engelhart Lake – five miles west of Venturia. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 550 acres. Maximum known depth 6 feet. Winterkill potential.

51. Lehr WMA – two miles east, and 1 mile south of Lehr. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 600 acres.

52. Mudd Lake – one mile west of Lehr. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 1,050 acres. Maximum known depth 12 feet.



Chris Grondahl

Andrea Grondahl removes the hook from a Dry Lake northern pike. During the wet years of the early 1990s, new lakes were frequently formed and stocked naturally through water overflows from lakes with an established fishery.

53. Schneider Lake – twelve miles east, 2 miles north and 1 mile east of Ashley. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 100 acres. Maximum known depth 10 feet.

54. Wolf Lake – three and ½ miles north, and ½ mile east of Zeeland. Stocked with adults in 1999. Approximate size – 700 acres. Maximum known depth 8 feet. Northern pike present. Winterkill potential.

NELSON COUNTY

55. Stump Lake – twelve miles south, and 1 mile west of Lakota. Stocked with fingerling perch from 1997-2000.

Approximate size – 6,000 acres. Maximum known depth is 31 feet. Some northern pike present.

RICHLAND COUNTY

56. Gully's Slough – four miles east, and 1 mile south of Lidgerwood. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 500 acres. Maximum known depth 10 feet.

57. Wahl Lake – two miles south of Lidgerwood. Stocked with fingerling in 2001. Approximate size – 150 acres. Maximum known depth 12 feet. Northern pike present.

SARGENT COUNTY

58. Fiala Lake – one mile west, and 2 miles south of Forman. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 190 acres. Maximum known depth 11 feet.

59. Gulleson Lake – one mile east of Rutland. Stocked with fingerling in 1997. Approximate size – 70 acres. Maximum known depth 12 feet. Northern pike present.

SHERIDAN COUNTY

60. Stober Lake – four miles west, and 1 mile north of Goodrich. Stocked with adults in 2000 and 2001. Approximate size – 450 acres. Maximum known depth 20 feet. Winter access easement only.

61. Wolf Lake – one-half mile south, and 1½ miles west of Martin. Stocked with adults in 1999. Winterkill potential.

STUTSMAN COUNTY

62. Wimbledon WMA (Dumpground Lake) – one-half mile north of Wimbledon. Stocked with eggs in 2000. Approximate size – 250 acres. Winterkill potential.

63. Falk Lake – three miles west, and ½ mile north of Courtenay. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 110 acres. Maximum known depth 4 feet. Winterkill potential. Winter access only.

64. Fox Lake – one and ½ miles west of Courtenay. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 250 acres. Maximum known depth 6 feet. Winterkill potential.

65. Hoggarth Lake – three miles west, and 3 miles south of Courtenay. Stocked with adults and eggs in 2000. Approximate size – 190 acres. Maximum known depth 15 feet.

66. R & M Lake – four miles east, and 5 miles north of Buchanan. Stocked with eggs in 2000. Approximate size – 160 acres. Maximum known depth 12 feet.

67. Schock Lake – one-half mile west of Spiritwood Lake. Stocked with adults in 2000. Approximate size – 650 acres. Maximum known depth 15 feet.

68. Warner's Slough – five miles south, and 2½ miles west of Courtenay. Stocked with eggs in 2000. Approximate size – 60 acres.

GENE VAN EECKHOUT is a district fisheries biologist at Jamestown. GREG POWER is the fisheries management/research section supervisor stationed in Bismarck.

WINTERKILL

Several perch lakes listed indicate there is winterkill potential. Anglers should take note and plan accordingly.

Some new perch lakes are naturally shallow. Drought conditions, especially in extreme south central counties may make them susceptible to winterkill. In general, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department does not manage lakes where the maximum depth is less than 12 feet; however, minimal management does occur on occasion, especially in new lakes where limited stocking may pay short-term dividends for local anglers.

In the lakes listed, especially the shallow ones, the best fishing will probably come in early winter after the ice cover on the lake is safe enough to allow anglers to access it, sometimes in late November, but usually in December. As winter lengthens there is increased chance that a marginal lake will not be able to sustain the fishery it has been growing for several years.

Winterkill results when a combination of stresses are imposed on a fish population. When sunlight available to oxygen producing plants is reduced by cloudy ice, deep snow or overcast days winterkill is likely to follow. Winterkill is caused by oxygen depletion and the concentration of toxic substances such as carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, and ammonia.

New perch fishing lakes mean new fishing opportunities for family outings close to home.



Chris Grondahl